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Presentation 11/12/2003 4:00:00 PM
Time:

Title: Does Metabolife 356® Have a Negative Impact on Hemodynamics?

Keywords: Hemodynamics, Pharmacology, Hypertension, Nutrition

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Disclosure B.F. Mc Bride, None; A. Krydusz, None; A.K. Karapanos, **Block:** None; J. Kluger, None; C. White, None.

Abstract Metabolife 356® was one of the top selling herbal product brands in the years 2001 and 2002. It is used for appetite suppression and contains 18 ingredients including ephedra, caffeine, and siberian ginseng. However, the impact of this drug on hemodynamics has not been studied previously.
Objective: To determine the impact of Metabolife 356® on hemodynamics. **Methods:** Normal healthy volunteers were randomized in a crossover fashion to receive one tablet of Metabolife 356® or matching placebo. Blood pressure, systemic vascular resistance, cardiac output, heart rate, and stroke volume evaluations (BioZ monitor, San Diego, CA) were taken at baseline and 1, 3, and 5 hours post-dosing. Evaluations were performed at the same time of day to minimize circadian variation and there was a one-week washout period between study phases. **Results:** Fifteen subjects (age: 27 ± 3 years, 56% male; weight: 73 ± 15 kg) were included in the study. No significant differences were noted between study groups for baseline hemodynamic values. However, the changes in systolic blood pressure from baseline were 10.00, 7.85, and 15.57 mmHg higher at 1, 3, and 5 hours in the Metabolife 356® group as compared to placebo ($p=0.0029$, $p=0.0105$, $p=0.0107$, respectively). The change in diastolic blood pressures from baseline were 5.26, 6.66, and 2.37 mmHg higher at 1, 3, and 5 hours in the Metabolife 356® group as compared to placebo ($p=0.0301$, $p=0.0331$, $p=0.1483$, respectively). The changes in systemic vascular resistance from baseline were 94.41, 121.27, and 53.49 (dyne*sec)/cm⁵ higher at 1, 3, and 5 hours in the Metabolife 356® group as compared to placebo ($p=0.0106$, $p=0.00587$, $p=0.0736$, respectively). Cardiac output and its constituents (heart rate and stroke volume) were not changed at any time point. **Conclusion:** Administration of a single dose of Metabolife 356® increases systolic and diastolic blood pressure primarily due to increases in systemic vascular resistance. Since this herbal supplement is recommended to be taken every 4 hours, it is possible that the changes in blood pressure are maintained throughout the day. Patients with hypertension at baseline should be cautioned against use until more information is available.

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